

Mini-Pills (progestin-only birth control pills)

How mini-pills work:

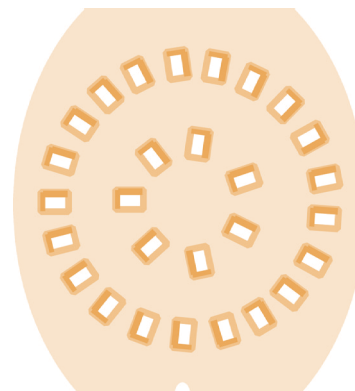
The mini-pill contains only one hormone, progestin. Mini-pills stop your body from releasing an egg, so no egg can be fertilized. The hormone also causes the cervical mucus (liquid at the opening of the uterus) to thicken, which can stop sperm from getting into the uterus.

How to use mini-pills:

For instructions on how to begin taking your pills, ask your doctor or health care provider. Take one pill every day at the same time every day. When your pill package is empty, begin your next package the next day. If you miss pills, ask your health care provider for instructions and don't have sex, or use foam and condoms as a back-up method for protection. Ask about emergency contraception.

Effectiveness:

Mini-pills are less effective than combination birth control pills. If you take one pill every day, at the exact same time every day, (perfect use) the effectiveness rate is 99.5%. Because some women may miss taking one or more pills, or don't take



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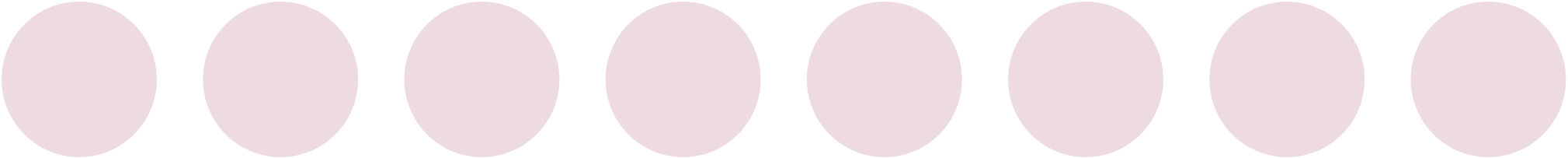
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them at the same time every day (typical use), effectiveness can decrease and five women in 100 could become pregnant in a year. If you are taking some other medications, the pills can be less effective. Tell your health provider any time you take other medications while taking birth control pills.

Benefits of the mini-pill:

Mini-pills have even fewer health risks than combination birth control pills, and fewer if any side effects. Mini-pills offer protection against uterine cancer. Mini-pills can be taken while you are breast-feeding. You will have very light periods, or no periods at all, with fewer menstrual cramps; because no blood builds up in your uterus, having no period is not a problem. If you want to get pregnant, you can become pregnant immediately when you stop taking the mini-pill.

Potential side effects and disadvantages:

You may have irregular bleeding or spotting between periods. Using “mini-pills” will not give you protection against HIV (AIDS) or sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as chlamydia, herpes, genital warts, gonorrhea, hepatitis B and syphilis.

Potential risks:

Mini-pills have few health risks; ask your health provider about potential risks or warning signs.

Where can you get mini-pills?

Mini-pills require a prescription from a doctor or a qualified health provider. Call your local family planning clinic for information.